## CALIFORNIA GIS COUNCIL ISSUE PAPER – DIGITAL LANDS RECORDS INFORMATION (DLRI)

DISCUSSION/DECISION ITEM: How can the California GIS Council work with local government to develop a solution that ensures Digital Land Records Information (DLRI) is adequately funded, meets minimum common standards and is widely accessible?

BACKGROUND: Land information (e.g., maps, records and data describing land) is vital to diverse government and private activities enabling and supporting economic development, commerce, homeland security, emergency response, infrastructure planning, education, environmental management and other key activities. Moreover, many governmental administrative processes are associated with specific parcels of land. Although some California local governments and many other states have implemented modern land information systems, California's land information remains a patchwork of non-standardized information stores that inhibit efficient and effective use by State, local, federal and private sector interests. The majority of other states are well ahead of California in this regard. Lack of access to comprehensive land information impedes commerce, public safety, administration of public assets and government efficiency in general. Moreover, current disconnected investments to improve access and management of land information are costly and ineffective in meeting statewide needs.

Implementing a statewide land information program will result in better information access supporting the State's business operations. Each implementation option presented within this report will improve accessibility for the State, thus enhancing the effectiveness of State programs. With the more comprehensive options, beneficiaries of a coordinated statewide Land Information system would include all levels of government, private enterprise, and property owners. Public and private business activities that will be enhanced are very broad including property tax administration, real estate transactions, property management, environmental management, public safety operations, land use planning, infrastructure planning and management, disaster response and recovery, and resource planning and management.

The report *Digital Lands Records Information – Status, Needs and Implementation Options* (2004) prepared by PSOMAS for the California Mapping Coordinating Committee details alternatives for pursuing a consistent, sustainable, appropriate accessible DLRI responsive to the needs of California's citizens. Go to <a href="http://gis.ca.gov/council/docs/DLRI\_Report\_Final.pdf">http://gis.ca.gov/council/docs/DLRI\_Report\_Final.pdf</a> to see this report.

The report identifies strategies and solutions other states have put in place to develop a multipurpose GIS based DLRI for their states. Alternatives do exist, and California is lagging behind nearly every other state in addressing DLRI needs.

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Options considered for developing a statewide DLRI are as follows:

Characteristics	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4	Option 5
Extent of GIS Parcels	Very Limited	Most of State	Statewide	Statewide	Statewide
Standardization	None	Only at State level	Most counties & State	Statewide with all counties	Statewide with all counties
Access	Limited State programs	All State programs	All State programs	All government & public	All government & public
Needs Fulfilled	Limited	Minimal for State programs	Many State, local, federal, private & public	Most State, local, federal, private & public	Most State, local, federal, private & public
Aggregation Role	State	State	State	State	State
Provision Role	State	State	State	State	Private
Development Cost	\$0	\$273,000	\$2,101,000	\$10,540,000	\$9,786,000
Annual Cost	\$0	\$125,000	\$334,000	\$395,000	\$285,000
% Funds for Local Government	0%	0%	69%	89%	96%
Annual Local Government DLRI Support	0	0	0	\$5,400,000	\$5,400,000

How to fund a DLRI initiative is a major consideration. Options include:

**Agency Funding** – Agency funding is through the general fund or special funds within the State budget. General funds are typically limited and in high demand, thus difficult to secure for new programs such as DLRI.

**DLRI Data Sales** – DLRI sales by public agencies provide supplemental revenue that may be redirected to DLRI operations. Counties have imposed highly varied data sales programs providing limited program revenue.

**Grant Funding** – Grants are available through many sources but are typically onetime funding for programs that must fulfill specific grant criteria. Grants may be used to initiate phases of DLRI development but will require additional ongoing funds.

**New DLRI Fees** – The State and counties could implement DLRI fees associated with the recording of land records documents that impact the level of maintenance of the DLRI. As land records activities increase, so would funding. Once implemented, this approach presumably could result in sustained DLRI funding.

**Private Sector Investment** – With adequate rights for data distribution and copyright protection, private sector investment may be used to fund the enhancement and ongoing operations of the statewide component of DLRI.

**Unfunded Mandate** – Legislation could require counties to maintain DLRI to a state standard and make it available for use.

The CGC needs to engage local government to determine what approach works best for all stakeholders.

Action Item: The California GIS Council voted unanimously to form a working group to meet and work with regional and local government representatives and professional groups like the California Assessors' Association to identify an acceptable, cost effective and feasible approach to developing, maintaining and sharing accurate, consistent, up-to-date statewide DLRI. This working group should have a recommendation for the Council by its next meeting.

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